



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS GUADALCANAL (LPH-7)
FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK 09562

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From: Commanding Officer, USS GUADALCANAL (LPH 7)
To: Director of Naval History (DP09B9), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, DC 20390

Subj: Command History; forwarding of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

Encl: (1) History of USS GUADALCANAL (LPH-7) for calendar year 1981

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.

T A Mercer

T. A. MERCER

Copy to:

CNO (OP-05D2)

COMNAVSURFLANT (Admiral McCain Library)

COMPHIBGRU TWO

COMPHIBRON TWO

COMPHIBRON SIX

PART I

COMMAND ORGANIZATION

PART I

SECTION A

MISSION

MISSION

To support and land troops and their helicopter-borne equipment and supplies by means of embarked helicopters of the landing force in an amphibious assault, utilizing the techniques of vertical envelopment.

To be equipped and prepared to evacuate and provide necessary medical and humanitarian services to civilian victims of armed conflict or natural disasters as directed by national authorities.

To establish and maintain seaborne presence and force in being in a geographic area in support of national policy.

PART I
SECTION B
COMMANDING OFFICER'S BIOGRAPHY

BIOGRAPHY OF

CAPTAIN THOMAS A. MERCER, USN

CAPTAIN THOMAS A. MERCER
UNITED STATES NAVY

Captain Thomas A. Mercer was born in (b) (6). He attended the United States Naval Academy, graduating in June 1962.

After initial short tours of duty as an instructor at the Naval Academy and aboard USS RANDOLPH (CVS-15), he entered flight training, and upon completion of training was designated as a Naval Aviator in February 1964. After A-4C training in VA-44 at NAS Cecil Field, he reported in August 1964 for a three year tour of duty with VA-72. During this time he completed two Mediterranean cruises and one Southeast Asia combat deployment aboard USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (CVA-42).

In August 1967, he reported to the U. S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, where he received his Master's Degree in Aeronautical Engineering in September 1969.

Subsequently he underwent training in the A-7E at NAS Lemoore and reported to VA-195 as the squadron was transitioning to the A-7E in March 1970. During this tour of duty he made two combat deployments to Southeast Asia aboard USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63) while serving as the Squadron Safety Officer and Maintenance Officer.

In June 1972, he reported to the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Washington, DC, where he served as the Light Attack Placement Officer in the Officer Distribution Division until January 1975.

After refresher training in the A-7E in VA-174 at NAS Cecil Field, he joined VA-82 as Executive Officer in July 1975, as the squadron deployed onboard USS NIMITZ (CVN-68) for initial shakedown trials and refresher training followed by a deployment to Northern Europe. He assumed command of Attack Squadron 82 in November 1976 while embarked aboard USS NIMITZ on its first Mediterranean deployment.

Following his command tour, Captain Mercer attended nuclear power training in Orlando, Florida and nuclear prototype training in Idaho Falls, Idaho, prior to reporting to USS ENTERPRISE (CVN-65) in July 1979 as Executive Officer. He detached from USS ENTERPRISE in May 1981 for training enroute to USS GUADALCANAL (LPH-7). He assumed command of USS GUADALCANAL in Palma Majorca on 21 September 1981.

Captain Mercer's awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross (3 awards); four individual flight Air Medals and 25 "Strike/ Flight" awards, six Navy Commendation Medals, and two Navy Unit Commendations. He has logged over 3000 hours in the A-4C/A-7E aircraft and has made 900 carrier landings.

Captain Mercer is married to the former (b) (6). They presently reside with their two sons in (b) (6).

PART I
SECTION C

EMBARKED COMMANDS

EMBARKED COMMANDS

PHIBRON SIX - JAN 81 - 31 DEC 81

COMCARGRU FOUR - 6 MARCH 81 - 1 APRIL 81

1. MARG 2-81 WORK-UP - 21 through 29 April 1981

PHIBRON SIX
DET TACRON TWO ONE
THREE FOUR MAU
HMM TWO SIX THREE
LIMA COMPANY, 3RD BN, 8TH MAR
WPNS COMPANY, 3RD BN, 8TH MAR
H&S COMPANY, 3RD BN, 8TH MAR
DET 2ND ENG BN
DET GOLF COMPANY, 3RD BN, 10TH MAR
DET 2ND TANK BN

2. MARG 2-81 DEPLOYMENT - 3 June through 11 November 1981

PHIBRON SIX
DET TACRON TWO ONE
THREE FOUR MAU
HMM TWO SIX THREE
LIMA COMPANY, 3RD BN, 8TH MAR
WPNS COMPANY, 3RD BN, 8TH MAR
H&S COMPANY, 3RD BN, 8TH MAR
DET 2ND ENG BN
DET GOLF COMPANY, 3RD BN, 10TH MAR
DET 2ND TANK BN
DET THREE FOUR MSSG
DET SURG PLATOON (MMART)
DET 2ND ANGLICO

PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

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NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

USS GUADALCANAL's operations for 1981 began with a three day fast cruise and preparations for the March 1982 INSURV and UMI.

On 9 February, Mr. Allan G. Woodruff of the Douglas Call Company, Inc. was working on the flight deck when he fell over the side of the ship. Mr. Woodruff struck the pier and subsequently fell into the water. Two GUADALCANAL sailors, (b) (6) and (b) (6), jumped into the 30 degree water and rescued Mr. Woodruff as he drifted under the pier. Both sailors received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for their actions. During 12 and 13 February, a fast cruise was conducted in preparation for the 18 through 21 February underway period to Onslow Bay, North Carolina. During this underway period, AV-8A Harrier requalification operations were conducted. In addition a Combat Systems Readiness Review (CSRR) was completed during the month of February.

An INSURV and UMI was conducted during the period 2 through 6 March. These inspections were conducted while underway in the VACAPES OP area. On 6 March, COMCARGRU FOUR and his staff embarked and conducted WINTEX 81 inport with GUADALCANAL as his flagship. The remainder of March and first week of April was spent in preparations for the MARG 2-81 deployment.

The MARG workups began on 6 April with the underway time to Newport, Rhode Island spent in watch qualifications and training, drills, shiphandling evolutions, and helicopter carrier qualifications. On 11 April members from the USS GUADALCANAL Reserve Unit 702 were embarked for weekend training. On 21 April GUADALCANAL unloaded the 34 MAU, BLT 3/8 and HMM 263 Marines at Morehead City, North Carolina. GUADALCANAL then proceeded to the Cherry Point OP area for helicopter carrier qualifications. Upon completion of the carrier qualifications, GUADALCANAL returned to Norfolk and commenced the POM period for the 1981 MARG 2-81 deployment.

On 1 June a fast cruise was conducted as a final check for readiness for sea. On 3 June GUADALCANAL departed Norfolk for the commencement of MARG 2-81 with COMPHIBRON SIX, TACRON 21 DET MIKE, and MMART TWO embarked. On 4 June GUADALCANAL embarked personnel and equipment of 34 MAU, BLT 3/8 and HMM-263 pierside at Morehead City. The embarkation was completed that afternoon and GUADALCANAL commenced the Atlantic transit to Rota, Spain with the other four amphibious ships of the MARG. During the transit, extensive General Quarters drills, GUNEX's, and shiphandling training were conducted. On 16 June Guadalcanal arrived in Rota, Spain for refueling and inchooped to CINCUSNAVEUR control. On 18 June GUADALCANAL reported to CTF 61 and continued her transit to Naples, Italy for a port visit from 20 June through 5 July.

On 21 June, MS3 Bobby Lee Zachery fell from a liberty boat while returning to the ship and drowned. On 24 June, LCPL R. Ojeda died from injuries he sustained after being struck by a car while on liberty in Naples.

From the 8th through the 13th of July, GUADALCANAL was at an Amphibious Training Anchorage in Augusta Bay, Sicily and conducted a successful Amphibious Assault exercise. LPH-7 departed Augusta Bay on the 13th and arrived in Venice, Italy on 17 July for an eight day inport period. GUADALCANAL departed Venice on the 25th of July enroute to a training anchorage at Brindisi, Italy. On 2 July, a major aircraft accident occurred in which an H-46 overturned on the flight deck. During the accident ABH3 Melvin D. Alston was knocked overboard and was lost at sea. No other injuries were incurred. GUADALCANAL arrived at Brindisi on 27 July and conducted an Amphibious Assault exercise until 2 August. Following the exercise, GUADALCANAL proceeded to Genoa, Italy for a port visit from 5 to 12 August. During this inport period GUADALCANAL received the following awards that had been previously announced for the FY 80/81 competitive cycle: Engineering "Red E", Damage Control "DC", Air Operations "E", AIMD "E", CIC "E", Communications "Green C", Gunnery Systems "E", Missile Systems "E", Electronic Warfare Operations "E", the Amphibious Assault Plaque and the Battle Efficiency "E".

On 12 August GUADALCANAL departed Genoa enroute to Toulon, France, arriving in Toulon on 14 August for a five day port visit. While in Toulon, the officers and men of GUADALCANAL participated in a multinational special ceremony to honor those who died in combat during a nearby amphibious landing in World War II.

The ship departed Toulon on 19 August and proceeded to Naples, Italy for a three week upkeep period. GUADALCANAL departed Naples on 10 September enroute to a training anchorage at Pian de Spille, Italy to participate in PHIBLEX 8-81. The PHIBLEX commenced on 13 September and terminated on 17 September. On 17 September a CH-53D helicopter crashed into the sea during a night approach to the ship with all five crewmembers perishing at sea. Following the search operations, GUADALCANAL proceeded to Palma, Spain for a five day port visit from 19 through 23 September. While inport Palma, a change of command ceremony was conducted during which Captain T. J. Johnson was relieved as Commanding Officer, USS GUADALCANAL by Captain T. A. Mercer.

On 23 September, GUADALCANAL departed PALMA and proceeded to Dougenbey, Turkey for exercise Display Determination 81. South of Sardinia a steering casualty occurred on board USS GUADALCANAL while refueling alongside which resulted in a minor collision with USNS Waccamaw. The remainder of the transit involved opposed operations with many NATO forces. GUADALCANAL anchored off Dougenbey on 29 September and the amphibious landing of Display Determination 81 was conducted from 29 September through 4 October.

On 6 October, GUADALCANAL turned over MARG responsibilities to the units of MARG 3-81. On 7 October following the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, GUADALCANAL proceeded to an operational position 50 miles off the coast of Egypt. GUADALCANAL was assigned MEDEVAC contingency duties for the three former U.S. Presidents attending President Sadat's funeral and was the nearest United States unit to the coast during the funeral.

Following the MEDEVAC contingency operations on 13 October, GUADALCANAL proceeded to Midronheira, Portugal for PHIBLEX 6-81, refueling in port at Cagliari, Sardinia on the way. The operation commenced on 20 October and terminated on 23 October. GUADALCANAL then proceeded to Rota, Spain for equipment washdown operations, arriving on 24 October and departing 29 October. Upon departure, GUADALCANAL commenced the Atlantic transit to Morehead City, North Carolina, arriving on 10 November. Following off load of the embarked Marines, GUADALCANAL embarked 140 male guests for a one day father/son cruise to her homeport of Norfolk, Virginia arriving on 11 November.

The remainder of the year was spent in upkeep during a tender availability with USS YELLOWSTONE and preparations for Exercise Alloy Express 82.

PART III

CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS AND EXERCISES

PART III

CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS AND EXERCISES

7-9 JAN 81 - Fast Cruise, Norfolk
15-16 JAN 81 - Supply Management Assistance Visit
19 JAN-20 FEB 81 - RAV Norfolk
26 JAN 81 - 3M Assist Visit
12-13 FEB 81 - Fast Cruise, Norfolk
18-21 FEB 81 - AV-8A Harrier Ops
18-19 FEB 81 - Transit Onslow Bay, N. C.
20-21 FEB 81 - Transit Norfolk
2-6 MAR 81 - INSURV/UMI
6 MAR-12 MAR 81 - WINTEX 81
9-12 MAR 81 - CAMSEE Inspection by CNAL
9 MAR - 3 APR 81 - RAV Norfolk
2-3 APR 81 - Supply Management Inspection
3 APR 81 - MARG 2-81 Presail Conference
6-7 APR - Ammo anchorage
8-10 APR 81 - Enroute to Newport, R. I.; assigned to TG 22.4
10 APR 81 - Helo CQ's in Rhode Island Sound
11-12 APR 81 - Inport Newport, RI; NAVRES WET
13-17 APR 81 - Transit to Norfolk
15 APR 81 - Helo CQ's in VACAPE OP AREA

18-19 APR 81 - Inport NORVA
 20-21 APR - Transit to Morehead City, N. C.
 21 APR 81 - Inport Morehead City, N. C.
 21-22 APR 81 - Helo CQ's Cherry Pt. OP AREA
 23-24 APR 81 - Transit to Norfolk
 24-26 APR 81 - Inport Norfolk
 27-28 APR 81 - Transit to Onslow Bay, N. C.
 29-30 APR 81 - MARG 2-81 final work-up Exercises/ORE
 30 APR - 1 MAY 81 - Transit Norfolk
 1 JUN 81 - Fast cruise, Personnel from Mobile Augmentation Readiness Team TWO from National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Maryland, embarked
 3 JUN 81 - Departed Norfolk, commenced MARG 2-81
 3-4 JUN - Transit to Morehead City, N. C.
 4 JUN - Inport Morehead City, N. C.; Underway to Rota, Spain
 16 JUN 81 - Inport Rota, Spain; Underway to Naples, Italy
 20 JUN-5 JUL 81 - Inport Naples, Italy
 21 JUN 81 - MS3 B. L. ZACHERY, USN, (b)(6), fell from liberty boat and drowned.
 24 JUN 81 - LCPL R. OJEDA, USMC, (b)(6) was struck by a car in Naples while on liberty and died as a result of his injuries.
 30 JUN 81 - Congressman English visit to GUADALCANAL
 6-7 JUL 81 - Transit to Augusta Bay, Sicily
 8-13 JUL 81 - At anchor in amphibious training anchorage, Augusta Bay, Sicily
 10 JUL 81 - COMSIXTHFLT, VADM ROWDEN visited ship.

13-17 JUL - 81 - Transit to Venice, Italy

17-24 JUL 81 - At anchor in Bay of Venice, Italy

25-26 JUL 81 - Transit to Brindisi, Italy

27 JUL 81 - Helicopter accident on flight deck, ABH3 M. D.
Alston was blown overboard and lost at sea.
Anchored at Brindisi, Italy

28 JUL 81 - Transit to LPH operating area

29 JUL 81 - 2 AUG 81 - Anchored at Brindisi, Italy.

31 JUL-1 AUG 81 - Shifted Brindisi anchorage to effect backload of
Marine personnel and equipment

2-5 AUG 81 - Transit to Genoa, Italy

4 AUG 81 - UNREP from USNS WACCAMAW

5-11 AUG 81 - Anchored Genoa, Italy

7-8 AUG 81 - Congressman Hart visit to GUADALCANAL

12-13 AUG 81 - Transit to Toulon, France

14-18 AUG 81 - Moored at Toulon, France

15 AUG 81 - MARG 2-81 participated in war memorial service at
Toulon, France

19-20 AUG 81 - Transit to Naples, Italy

21 AUG - 9 SEP 81 - Inport Naples, Italy

25 AUG 81 - CINCUSNAVEUR/COMSIXTHFLT visit

3-8 SEP 81 - Mid-cruise corrosion inspection by COMFAIRMED

3 SEP 81 - Commander Allied Forces, Southern Europe made an
official visit.

10-12 SEP 81 - Transit to Pian de Spille, Italy

13-17 SEP 81 - PHIBLEX 8-81 at Pian de Spille, Italy

14-18 SEP 81 - Command Inspection by COMPHIBRON SIX

17 SEP 81 - Helicopter accident - CH-53D crashed into the water,
killing all five crewmembers

19-23 SEP 81 - Inport Palma de Majorca

21 SEP 81 - USS GUADALCANAL Change of Command

23-29 SEP 81 - Transit to Dougenbey, Turkey

24 SEP 81 - Minor collision with USNS WACCAMAW due to steering malfunction during refueling.

29 SEP - 3 OCT 81 - Exercise Display Determination in Dougenbey, Turkey

30 SEP 81 - A crewmember from the Italian ship ITS Carole was received aboard for possible appendicitis and transferred to USS NIMITZ.

2 OCT 81 - Commander in Chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe made a formal visit

4-5 OCT 81 - Transit to Souda Bay, Crete

6 OCT 81 - Anchorage Souda Bay, Crete

7-13 OCT 81 - Transit to Egyptian MODLOC; in support of funeral for Egyptian President SADAT, GUADALCANAL assigned MEDEVAC contingency station

14-16 OCT 81 - Transit to Cagliari, Sardinia

17 OCT 81 - Refuel pierside in Cagliari, Sardinia.

17-19 OCT 81 - Transit to Medronheira, Portugal

20-22 OCT 81 - PHIBLEX 6-81 at Medronheira, Portugal

21 OCT 81 - COMPHIBRON SIX equipment washdown/offload conference

23 OCT 81 - Transit to Rota, Spain

24-28 OCT 81 - Inport Rota, Spain

24-26 OCT 81 - Equipment washdown/offload/onload evolution

28 OCT - 9 NOV 81 - Transit to Morehead City, NC

9 NOV 81 - HMM 263 fly off

10 NOV 81 - 34 MAU, BLT 3/8 debarkation, father/son cruise - transit to Norfolk

11 NOV 81 - Inport Norfolk, Virginia

4 DEC 81 - COMPHIBRON SIX Change of Command

PART IV

DOCUMENTARY ANNEXES

PART IV

ANNEX A - ENGINEERING

ANNEX A - ENGINEERING

Throughout January to March 1981, the ship had extensive work accomplished including a complete overhaul of the number 1 and 2 evaporators. From 3 through 6 March 1981, GUADALCANAL had an INSURV Inspection. In May the ship had an MTT (Mobile Training Team) assist visit and on 3 June 1981, GUADALCANAL deployed on MARG 2-81. While on MARG 2-81 the Engineering Department participated in numerous exercises and drills. The Engineering Department was awarded the Engineering "E" and "DC" Award for 1981. From 11 November through 31 December 1981 the ship underwent a major upkeep period in preparation for a Northern Europe deployment.

PART IV

ANNEX B - AIRCRAFT INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE

ANNEX B

AIRCRAFT INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE

The Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department was tasked with maintaining repair facilities for the UH-1N helicopter assigned to GUADALCANAL and the various helicopter models assigned to embarked commands. These include the UH-1N, CH-46, CH-53, and AH1T helicopters.

Milestones accomplished in 1981 included a 3-M assist visit on 26 January. March included an INSURV during the 2nd through the 6th, and a Carrier Aviation Maintenance/Supply Effectiveness Evaluation Inspection by COMNAVAIRLANT. A mid-cruise corrosion inspection by COMPAIRMED was accomplished 3-8 September, which was followed by a Command Inspection during September 14-18th by COMPHIBRON SIX.

Work produced by AIMD include 1364 repairable components processed of which 965 or 70.7% were repaired and returned to a Ready-For-Issue (RFI) status. The GUADALCANAL's organic UH-1N helicopter flew 507.8 hours, operating at a full mission capable percentage of 69.1%. The AIMD Navy Oil Analysis Spectrometric Laboratory processed 340 oil samples for the various departments onboard and embarked Marine squadrons. The adjective grade for the mid-cruise corrosion control audit on the organic UH-1N helicopter was outstanding. In recognition of these achievements AIMD won the Battle Efficiency "E" Award.

PART IV

ANNEX C - MEDICAL

ANNEX C

MEDICAL

Personnel of Mobile Medical Augmentation Readiness Team Two (MMART-2), from the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, embarked on 1 June 1981 and served until 22 August 1981, departing the ship at Naples, Italy. The Department was also assisted by Hospital Corpsmen from Lima and Weapons Companies, 3/8 Marines and HMM 263.

The Medical Department provided support as the primary casualty receiving ship for a five ship task group during the Mediterranean Cruise, MARG 2-81. Significant events during the cruise are as follows:

On 30 September 1981, while participating in Exercise Display Determination, at Dougenbey, Turkey, a crew member of the Italian Navy ship ITS Carole, Vito Solitario, was received onboard for treatment for possible appendicitis. The patient was further evacuated to the USS NIMITZ, where his appendix was removed.

The Medical Department was tasked with providing standby medical facilities on 10 October 1981 for emergency use by three former United States Presidents who were attending the funeral of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

The following is the workload data for the period January to December 1981:

	OUTPATIENT VISITS	INPATIENT DAYS	LABORATORY	PHARMACY	X-RAY	TOTAL PERSONNEL STRENGTH
JAN	295	0	48	247	12	681
FEB	245	0	137	126	32	673
MAR	92	0	39	409	27	687
APR	171	0	160	301	65	652
MAY	322	0	95	116	25	573
JUN	309	8	1543	118	218	1452
JUL	107	118	650	801	118	1417
AUG	508	18	480	752	323	1848
SEP	471	16	234	626	302	1391
OCT	627	87	225	793	218	1888
NOV	305	3	79	254	76	1413
DEC	143	2	103	170	42	540
TOTAL:	4807	302	3634	5402	1866	12075

PART IV

ANNEX D - PERSONNEL

ANNEX D

PERSONNEL

The following is summary of the status of personnel during calendar year 1981:

<u>On board strength</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>
1 January 1981	603	49
31 December 1981	645	44

Retention statistics for 1981:

	<u>1st TERM</u>	<u>2nd TERM</u>	<u>CAREER</u>	<u>FLEET RESERVE</u>
ELIG	91	16	19	9
NELIG	4	0	0	0
REEN	30	10	16	3
GROSS %	31.58	62.5	84.21	33.3
NET %	32.97	62.5	84.21	33.3

PART IV

ANNEX E - LEGAL ACTIVITIES

ANNEX E

LEGAL ACTIVITIES

Summary of Legal Action for calendar year 1981:

1. General Court-Martials - 1
2. Special Court-Martials - 6
3. Summary Court-Martials - 4
4. Non-judicial Punishments - 176
5. Administrative Discharges

Unfitness - 0

Unsuitability - 1

Misconduct - 9

Convenience of the Government - 1

Conscientious Objection - 0

Substandard Performance/Admin Burden to the Command - 13

PART IV

ANNEX F - COMMUNICATIONS

ANNEX F

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications won the Communications Green "C" for the 1981 competitive year. While deployed as a unit of SIXTH Fleet the Communications Department received commendations from various Naval Communications Stations and European Commands for outstanding reliability and proficiency during various HF tests. GUADALCANAL communications also received a "Well Done" from Rear Admiral Fuller, COMCARGRU FOUR, for outstanding communications support during WINTEX 81.

While deployed in the Mediterranean as the flagship for CTF SIX ONE and CTF SIX TWO, GUADALCANAL's Communications Department supported all communications requirements for COMPHIBRON SIX, 34 MAU, HMM 263, and BLT 3/8. A monthly average of 12,797 incoming messages and 2,241 outgoing messages were processed. Total copies reproduced numbered 1,526,910 for the MARG 2-81 deployment.

Additional equipment was installed during 1981 which enhanced GUADALCANAL's ability to rapidly and reliably communicate. An exacting antenna maintenance program was instituted and steadfastly carried out.

PART IV

ANNEX G - DENTAL

ANNEX C

DENTAL

January through May 1981, the Dental Department delivered routine dental care to shipboard personnel and final preparations for MARG 2-81 were completed. During June through November 1981, routine as well as emergency care was provided to personnel of all ships in the MARG. Emergencies flown to GUADALCANAL from the field or from ships without dental departments were treated. Only one dental patient required a MEDEVAC flight to NAVREGDENCEN Naples, Italy during the deployment.

New dental cabinets, fixed and mobile, were installed in the department during November/December 1981 time frame. COMNAVSURFLANT Dental Officer, (b) [REDACTED] conducted an administrative assist visit to the (6) Department on 11 December 1981. No discrepancies were noted and no changes were suggested to improve operation of the dental clinic.

PART IV

ANNEX H - AIR OPERATIONS

ANNEX H

AIR OPERATIONS

During the competitive cycle from 1 January 1981 to 31 December 1981, USS GUADALCANAL compiled an impressive array of safety oriented operations. The year began with GUADALCANAL requesting and receiving a Naval Safety Center Safety Survey on 21 and 22 January 1981. In February 1981, the ship was the vehicle for Naval Air Engineering Center's validation of the proposed LHA/LPH NATOPS Manual. These two events enhanced shipwide preparations for the 2 through 6 March 1981 INSURV Inspection.

During the MARG 2-81 deployment from 3 June 1981 to 11 November 1981, GUADALCANAL attained a perfect score of 100% on the Z-6-V SELEX for Aircraft Crash and Fire and near perfect scores of 99% on the Z-3-V Combat Flight Operations and the Z-4-V Helo Control. These SELEXS are weighted very heavily toward the safety of the operation and reflect GUADALCANAL's total commitment to aviation safety. In August and September, the ship received a Command Inspection from Commander Amphibious Squadron SIX. The adjective grade assigned to Safety Administration was "outstanding" with 3.6 being the numerical grade. The Air Department, including Flight Deck Safety, also received high praise and a grade of 3.5.

Statistics:

Aircraft types: Ch-53, CH-46, AH-1T, UH-1N, SH-2F, SH-3 and AV-8A.

Exposure data:

Day embarked helo hours - 2935.2
Night embarked helo hours - 408.0
Day helo landings - 3523
Night helo landings - 541
Helo fueling evolutions - 1480
Helo hot refueling evolutions - 1213
Day AV-8A landings - 50
Passengers carried - 17,193
Cargo carried (pounds) - 1,111,146
Flight operating days - 138

Crewchiefs qualified: 9

TACEVAL: HML-263 was the first squadron to deploy with a full complement of Night Vision Goggles (NVS). This allowed the squadron to conduct night inserts of ground troops at Brindisi, Italy, amphibious training anchorage.

Class A aircraft flight and flight related mishaps:

HMM-263 Mishap 01-81/CH-46E - Aircraft attempted to lift off while chained on deck, breaking its chains and rolling over.

HMM-263 Mishap 02-81/CH-53D - Aircraft flew into the water while conducting Night Flight Operations.

Aircraft ground mishaps: Five minor

Contributions to Safety:

--1. The squadron submitted an urgent change to the CH-46 NATOPS Manual as a result of the CH-46 Class A flight mishap.

2. Incident to a different CH-46 mishap, the ship's bridge teams and Air Department personnel developed an SOP to be complied with in cases of a certain type of Rotor Brake Failure.

3. GUADALCANAL has reviewed and practiced the alternate Night VMC Recovery pattern contained in the proposed LHA/LPH NATOPS Manual and has adopted it for use under marginal weather conditions.

ANNEX L NAVIGATION

Over 20,000 nautical miles were plotted which included four Atlantic ocean crossings, extensive operations in the North Sea, circumnavigating England and Scotland, and an in and out transit around the eastern side of Denmark. Of particular note were the precision anchorages accomplished within the Norwegian Fjords at night. On several occasions, a perfect anchor drop was made on a sea mount some 50 fathoms beneath the water's surface using the ship's fathometer and limited visual/radar information.

The department designing an overlay grid template which was used during exercise United Effort. Position accuracy of ± 3 miles was required at various times during the open seas transit. This high degree of accuracy was unfalteringly maintained. Other instances which drew attention to the Navigation Department were providing position information to a sailboat of land off Morehead City, NC, and providing expeditious routing directions to assist in the SAR operations of a Colombian C-130 aircraft that crashed off the Virginia-Maryland coast.

The accuracy of the Navigation Department's plotting was significantly upgraded with the addition of a new Loran "C" receiver/processor. This equipment used in conjunction with the sophisticated Satellite Navigation system installed on board provides position accuracies within 100 yards of ship's actual location.



**COMMANDING OFFICER
USS INCHON LPH-12
FPO NEW YORK
09529**

1982

LPH12:TNG:COB
5750
Ser 627
5 JUN 1983

From: Commanding Officer, USS INCHON (LPH-12)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP 05D2)

Subj: Command History for 1982; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

Encl: (1) Command History for 1982

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "D. P. Johnson".

D. P. JOHNSON
By direction

Copy to:
Director of Naval History

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lagger".

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF EVENTS

The year 1982 was very diverse for the officers and crew of the USS INCHON. The "Mighty Chon" started the year moored starboard side to in homeport of Norfolk, Virginia. On New Year's Eve the INCHON was anchored off the coast of Beirut, Lebanon as part of the Multi-National Peacekeeping Force.

The beginning of 1982, January and February in particular, were spent conducting independent steaming exercises in order to be adequately trained for Refresher Training that was conducted in the month of March in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. General Quarters, flight ops, gun shoots and other drills became routine occurrences.

In late February the INCHON was underway for the tense and rigorous training associated with GTMO. The officers and crew of the LPH worked very hard in the month of March in order to finish this intense training. They were rewarded for their stellar performance with a weekend in Montego Bay, Jamaica. After this little breather it was back to the grindstone in order to finish GTMO.

Disaster struck three days before GTMO was to be completed. Both of the emergency diesel generators became inoperable and the ship was unable to finish its fervent training. After attaching a portable emergency diesel generator to the flight deck, INCHON was escorted back to homeport Norfolk, Virginia by the USS PENSACOLA.

The next five weeks were spent pierside in an availability status. The INCHON was underway again about the middle of May for an Amphibious Refresher training exercise. After successfully completing the scheduled training, it was back to Norfolk, Virginia in preparation for an Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE). This exam was conducted during the end of June. Due to unforeseen problems with the ship's engineering plant, INCHON was unable to complete the OPPE.

After returning to Norfolk, the ship began to prepare for a Northern European and Mediterranean Deployment, which was to occur in late August.

Preparations were in the form of a MARG work up and the second incomplete OPPE.

On August 23rd, USS INCHON departed Norfolk, Virginia for its scheduled Mediterranean Deployment. The cruise began on an interesting note. Two AV-8 Harriers did several take-offs and landings on INCHON's flight deck. A minor detour was made and LPH-12 stopped in Morehead City, North Carolina to embark Battalion Landing Team 3/8 and Marine Squadron HMM 263.

INCHON then became part of "United Effort '82", as she joined thirty other ships transiting the Atlantic to meet other members of NATO in Northern Europe.

Early, in September, the INCHON arrived and anchored in Sinclair Bay, Scotland. From there she formed up with ships of the NATO forces for an amphibious landing in Denmark. The exercise became known as "Northern Wedding." Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Melugn Paisley, who was embarked in the INCHON, gave the officers and crew a "Well Done" for their part in the amphibious exercise.

On the fourth~~th~~ of September, Captain William R. Westerman was relieved as Commanding Officer by Captain Ruppert. Now under the guidance of Captain Noel L. Ruppert, INCHON proceeded to Sarous Bay, Turkey for the Exercise Display Determination. Upon completion of this Southern European Exercise she then headed for Naples, Italy and the Sixth Fleet for an intermediate availability.

In late October INCHON received a change in orders and was sent to Beirut, Lebanon to become part of the Multi-National Peacekeeping Force. On the first of November the "Mighty Chon" arrived off the coast of Beirut to relieve USS GUAM (LPH-7), and become part of the Lebanon Contingency Operations. The ship's schedule became a continuous underway operation known as "Gator Squares". When she was not performing these difficult maneuvers, INCHON was at anchor.

Tragedy struck the officers and crew of INCHON on Christmas day when Seaman Apprentice Scott E. Barnes was killed, in the line of duty, while working in a small boat recovery detail. SA Barnes died as a result of injuries sustained when he was caught between the boat davit arm and davit rest. Six days later, 1982 came to an end.

Even though the end of 1982 was bleak, the INCHON accomplished some very impressive milestones. The ship was nominated for the highly regarded Admiral Flatley Award. INCHON also set a record for the number of take-offs and landings on the flight deck of an LPH. Once again the INCHON highly exemplifies its motto in 1982, "Never More Brightly!"

COMMAND ORGANIZATION 1982

a. Commanding Officer:

Captain William R. Westerman, USN, 25 April 1981 to 14 September 1982.
Captain Noel L. Ruppert, USN, 14 September 1982 to present.

b. Basic missions and functions remained unchanged.

c. INCHON was under administrative control of Amphibious Squadron SIX.

d. INCHON's homeport was Norfolk, Virginia.

e. Shipboard helicopter landings during the year (listed by quarter):

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number of Helo landings</u>
31 MAR 82	385
30 SEP 82	83
30 SEP 82	429
31 DEC 82	617
Totals:	<u>1514</u>

The ship's Helo, UH flew 679 hours.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF EVENTS

- 1 JAN 82: Moored starboard side to Pier 5, Norfolk, Virginia attached to COMPHIBRON SIX.
- 18 JAN 82: Underway for drills off the coast of Virginia.
- 22 JAN 82: Moored Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 2 FEB 82: Underway for drills off the coast of North Carolina.
- 11 FEB 82: Moored Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 24 FEB 82: Underway for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
- 1 MAR 82: Arrive Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for Refresher Training.
- 28 MAR 82: Emergency diesel generators become inoperable. A portable emergency diesel generator installed on the flight deck. The ship was escorted back to Norfolk, Virginia by the USS PENSACOLA.
- 9 APR 82: Arrive Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia for availability.
- 17 MAY 82: Underway for Amphibious Refresher Training.
- 27 MAY 82: Arrive Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 25 JUN 82: Underway for Operational Propulsion Plan Exam.
- 28 JUN 82: Arrive Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.
- 6 JUL 82: Underway for MARG workup.
- 9 JUL 82: Arrive Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.
- 12 JUL 82: Underway for MARG workup.
- 16 JUL 82: Arrive Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.
- 22 JUL 82: Underway for OPPE, because of material breakdown the INCHON is unable to complete OPPE.
- 23 JUL 82: Arrive Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.
- 23 AUG 82: Underway for Northern European - Mediterranean deployment MARG 3-82.
- 24 AUG 82: Arrive Morehead City, North Carolina to embark Battalion Landing Team 3/8 and Marine Squadron HMM 263.
- 27 AUG 82: Underway for Northern Europe. The USS INCHON participates in Exercise "United Effort '82".
- 9 SEP 82: Anchored in Sinclair Bay, Scotland.

- 10 SEP 82: Underway for Esbjerg, Denmark and to join other NATO forces for exercise Northern Wedding.
- 13 SEP 82: Anchored off Horns Feef, Esbjerg, Denmark.
- 14 SEP 82: Captain William R. Westerman relieved as Commanding Officer by Captain Noel L. Ruppert.
- 18 SEP 82: Underway enroute to Arhus, Denmark.
- 19 SEP 82: Anchored off of Arhus, Denmark where BLT 3/8 and HMM 263 conducted an amphibious air assault.
- 24 SEP 82: Anchor at Howatcher Bucht, West Germany for "Bold Guard" exercises.
- 25 SEP 82: Underway for Sarous Bay, Turkey.
- 30 SEP 82: The INCHON joins the rest of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.
- 6 OCT 82: Anchored in Sarous Bay, Turkey for the Display Determination Exercise.
- 11 OCT 82: Underway to Naples, Italy.
- 14 OCT 82: Arrive Naples, Italy for intermediate availability.
- 25 OCT 82: Underway for Beirut, Lebanon.
- 1 NOV 82: Arrive Beirut, Lebanon OPAREA to relieve USS GUAM (LPH-7) and participate as a representative of the United States in the Multi-National Peacekeeping Force.
- 25 DEC 82: SA Scott E. Barnes was accidentally killed while working in a small boat recovery detail. SA Barnes died as a result of injuries sustained when he was caught between the boat davit arm and davit rest.



1983

**COMMANDING OFFICER
USS INCHON LPH-12
FPO NEW YORK
09529**

LPH12:TNG:COB
5750

Ser **1248**

8 OCT 1984

From: Commanding Officer, USS INCHON (LPH-12)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP 05D2)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR 1983; SUBMISSION OF

Ref: (a) OPNAVISNT 5750.12C

Encl: (1) Command History for 1983

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.

L. W. Caplinger
L. W. CAPLINGER
By direction

Copy to:
Director of Naval History

Loggess

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF EVENTS

The beginning of the year found USS INCHON (LPH-12) off the coast of Lebanon in support of the Multinational Peacekeeping Force. On 9 JAN INCHON got underway for a port visit to Antalya, Turkey, arriving on 10 JAN. INCHON was underway back to the Levent Coast on 15 JAN and arrived on station on 16 JAN. Except for the port visit to Turkey and a periodic sortie, INCHON remained at anchor in support of the Marines ashore.

INCHON backloaded MARG 3-82 from Beirut Airport and got underway for Rota, Spain on 17 FEB for turnover with the USS GUADALCANAL on 22 FEB. While inport, the OPPE Team embarked and sailed with INCHON for Morehead City on 25 FEB, commencing the OPPE the same day. The OPPE was terminated for equipment failure.

Arriving in Morehead City on 8 MAR, INCHON debarked men and equipment of MARG 3-82. The following day the INCHON was underway and arrived in Norfolk on 9 MAR. INCHON then commenced a one month leave and upkeep period.

During the first half of April, INCHON continued her leave and upkeep. On 15 APR, INCHON set sail to participate in Solid Shield 83 with HM-16 embarked for the exercise off Onslow Bay, NC. On 16 APR, the ship anchored off the North Carolina coast and commenced mine countermeasures operations with HM-16. On 24 APR, while recovering a MK-105 minesweeping device, a magnetic cable became fouled with the ships screw and necessitated UDT assistance. On 28 APR the screw was unfouled and the INCHON set sail for Norfolk, arriving on 29 APR.

The month of MAY was highlighted by the successful completions of a 3M Inspection and an OPPE. The remainder of the month was spent in port Norfolk.

The month of June was taken up with in port time, with the ship being underway only from 20 JUN to 27 JUN for ISE operations in VA Capes operation area. On 27 JUN, INCHON returned to port and commenced an INSERV inspection that continued into July.

The INSERV inspection ended successfully on 4 JUL. INCHON remained in port until 18 JUL when she got underway to support carrier qualifications for Marine squadron pilots off the coast of North Carolina. INCHON stayed at anchor until 20 JUL when she sailed for Norfolk, arriving on 22 JUL. Upon return, INCHON entered a POM period in preparation for MCM-83.

On 8 AUG, INCHON got underway for a dependents cruise and the onload of HM-16 and HC-4. On 11 AUG, INCHON got underway for MCM-83 and exercise "Uniform Yowl". While transiting the English Channel the H-53E's of HC-4 flew off and commenced a cross country flight to their new home, NAS SIGONELLA, IT. After transiting the English Channel INCHON put into Zeebrugge, BE on 22 AUG for a seven day port visit. On 28 AUG, INCHON left Zeebrugge and headed for her next port call at Portsmouth, UK, arriving on 3 SEP.

INCHON left Portsmouth on 9 SEP and commenced exercise "Uniform Yowl" off the coast of Belgium. During the actual operational phase of "Uniform Yowl" INCHON acted as the flag ship for Commander Standing Naval Forces Channel, CDR GUY BUSARD, Belgian Navy. During the exercise, INCHON swept its assigned area for moored mines to a 98% confidence level. The exercise was completed on 19 SEP and

Enclosure (1)

INCHON returned to Zeebrugge for another enjoyable five day port visit. On 25 SEP, INCHON set sail for Lisbon, PO arriving on 29 SEP.

On 3 OCT, INCHON set sail for Rota, SP, arriving on 4 OCT for a one day port call to refuel. On 7 OCT, INCHON rendezvoused with four U. S. Minesweepers to escort them across the Atlantic. During the transit INCHON astern refueled the four sweeps five times each. The MSO's were detached on 18 OCT and INCHON proceeded to Norfolk, arriving on 21 OCT. Upon arrival INCHON entered a leave and upkeep period for the remainder of the month.

On 7 NOV, INCHON entered an IMAV which lasted until 31 DEC. The major work accomplished was the rewinding of one SSTG and the repair of numerous other systems throughout the ship. The IMAV was completed on schedule on 31 DEC.

COMMAND ORGANIZATION 1983

- A) Commanding Officer: Captain Noel L. Ruppert, USN
- B) Basic mission and functions remained unchanged.
- C) INCHON was administratively under the control of Amphibious Squadron SIX until 01 OCT 83. INCHON was then transferred to Amphibious Squadron TWELVE.
- D) INCHON's home port was Norfolk, VA.
- E) There were 4329 landings of which 473 were at night.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF EVENTS

01 JAN 83	Anchored off of Beirut, Lebanon
09 JAN 83	Underway for Antalya, Turkey
10 JAN 83	Arrived Antalya, Turkey
15 JAN 83	Underway for Lebanese Coast
16 JAN 83	Arrived coast of Lebanon
17 FEB 83	Backloaded MARG 3-82. Underway for Rota, Spain
22 FEB 83	Arrived Rota, Spain. Commenced turnover with USS GUADALCANAL.
25 FEB 83	Underway for Morehead City, NC. Commenced OPPE.
27 FEB 83	Terminated OPPE.
08 MAR 83	Arrived Morehead City. Unloaded MARG 3-82 and HMM-263.
09 MAR 83	Underway for Norfolk, VA.
10 MAR 83	Arrived Norfolk, VA.
15 APR 83	Underway for Solid Shield 83.
16 APR 83	Anchored in Onslow Bay, NC.
28 APR 83	Underway for Norfolk, VA.
29 APR 83	Arrived Norfolk, Va.
09 MAY 83	Underway in VA Capes for OPPE.
11 MAY 83	Completed OPPE, returned to Norfolk, VA.
20 JUN 83	ISE VA Capes
27 JUN 83	Returned to Norfolk, VA.
18 JUL 83	Underway for Marine Pilot Carrier Qualification in Cherry Pt Op Area.
22 JUL 83	Returned to Norfolk, VA.
08 AUG 83	Underway for dependents cruise and embarking of HM-16 and HC-4.
11 AUG 83	Underway for MCM-83.
22 AUG 83	Arrived Zeebrugge, BE.
28 AUG 83	Underway for Portsmouth, UK.

03 SEP 83	Arrived Portsmouth, UK.
09 SEP 83	Underway for Operation "Uniform Yowl"
14 SEP 83	COMEX "Uniform Yowl"
19 SEP 83	Completed "Uniform Yowl", Underway for Zeebrugge, BE.
20 SEP 83	Arrived Zeebrugge, BE.
25 SEP 83	Underway for Lisbon, PO.
29 SEP 83	Arrived Lisbon, PO.
03 OCT 83	Underway for Rota, SP.
04 OCT 83	Arrived Rota, SP.
05 OCT 83	Underway for Norfolk, VA.
21 OCT 83	Arrived Norfolk, Va.
07 NOV 83	Commenced IMAV.
31 DEC 83	Completed IMAV.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

U.S.S. PORTLAND (LSD-37)
FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 09582 ✓

5750
Ser LSD 37-ADMIN/ 602
15 NOV 1984

From: Commanding Officer, USS PORTLAND (LSD 37)
To: Director of Naval History, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20370
Subj: USS PORTLAND (LSD 37) COMMAND HISTORY - 1983
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C
Encl: (1) USS PORTLAND (LSD 37) Command History - 1983

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.


S. D. GASTAR

Copy to:
COMNAVSURFLANT
COMPHIBGRU TWO
COMPHIBRON TEN

On 1 January 1983, USS PORTLAND (LSD 37) was moored in her homeport at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia. Her Commanding Officer was Commander Jerry R. MCDONALD, USN. January found the ship in an Intermediate Maintenance Availability with much work devoted to grooming the ship for a successful 3M inspection in February and an INSURV inspection in March. The month of April was spent in pre-deployment training to work-up the team of ships assigned to Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group 2-83. The final weeks of April were devoted to material repairs and pre-deployment leave.

On 10 May USS PORTLAND (LSD 37) departed Little Creek with the other units of MARG 2-83. USS IWO JIMA, USS EL PASO, USS AUSTIN, and USS HARLAN COUNTY sailed to Morehead City, North Carolina to embark Marine Amphibious Unit Two Four. With our MARG fully assembled, the task force sailed for the Mediterranean, passing through the straits of Gibraltar on the night of 24 May 1984. The task force arrived off the coast of Beirut, Lebanon on the evening of 27 May and in a three-day turnover relieved MARG 1-83. On 1 June USS PORTLAND became a major contributor in support of the Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Beirut, Lebanon.

Daily routine off the Lebanon coast became a continuous string of changing taskings and challenges. Watch requirements grew as the focus of world attention and a growing concern for increased security effected daily evolutions. Topside security patrols, picket boats, "Beirut Bus" admin boat assignments, "Sling shot" and "Quick draw" gunnery exercises and countless ballast details, wet well operations, underway replenishments and anchoring details kept all hands busy. The flight deck team recorded over 2000 separate landings during the deployment.

Not all days were full of work. On 11 June, following an underway replenishment of fresh fruit, vegetables, milk (always a favorite) and ice cream, the well deck was flooded with fresh/clean sea water and the "Portland pool" was open. Other MARG ships were invited over for a dip the next day.

On 30 June, 19 marines and 73 navy personnel were embarked for a liberty port trip to Antalya, Turkey. Arriving 1 July the scenic seaport was a perfect setting for a quiet rest and good food. Many crew members found sightseeing tours and shopping trips to be the perfect change of pace before returning to Beirut on 8 July.

USS PORTLAND was routinely tasked to host visiting guests from the Beirut area. On 16 July, 20 students from American University (Beirut) visited and on 17 July more than 100 Lebanese and American employees of the U. S. Embassy in Beirut visited for an "All American" picnic complete with cook out and games for young and old. Following the successful command inspection given by Commander Amphibious Squadron EIGHT on 26 and 27 July, the ship received the unusual, but exciting, assignment to host the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (and large contingent of aides and support personnel) for an overnight stay. With only four hours advance notice the ship was ready to host the Chairman and his staff, Commander Sixth Fleet, Commander Task Force Sixty One, and other senior officers for a great dinner onboard.

With tension growing ashore and the tempo of operations seeming to have a non-stop pace, the ship's departure from the Beirut operating area for Athens, Greece was a welcome relief. Arriving on 19 August over 40 crew members were met by wives and girlfriends for a great week of sun, relaxation and sight seeing.

With news of increased tension and hostilities in Beirut, the ship departed Athens on 28 August. The tempo of operations remained high with most efforts devoted to logistic support for forces ashore. On 1 September Commander Amphibious Squadron TEN was commissioned and assumed administrative command of USS PORTLAND. Special Envoy to the Secretary of State, Mr. McFarlane visited PORTLAND on 23 September and a special congressional fact finding delegation headed by Representative Bill Nichols visited the ship on 24-25 September. Their visit concluded with one of the hundreds of flight quarters events - this time to fly the congressional delegation to USS NEW JERSEY (BB 62) a powerful addition to the offshore task force.

In late September USS PUGET SOUND (AD 38) was anchored off Iedon, Lebanon and USS PORTLAND moored alongside. This brief repair period was the only repair period of the deployment. When shifting winds and seas caused the two ships to pitch and roll, the repair period came to an abrupt end. Fortunately the engineers were able to re-assemble the propulsion equipment quickly and there was only superficial damage where the two ships touched together.

Visitors continued to seek out PORTLAND as the focus of world attention on MARG 2-83 continued to rise. Tension and hostilities elevated ashore. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Watkins, visited on 6 October and Commander Naval Surface Forces, U. S. Atlantic, Vice Admiral Briggs, visited on 10 October.

On the morning of 23 October 1983 the world was shocked with the report of a terrorist bombing at the Battalion Landing Team Headquarters ashore. A rescue team from the ship went ashore immediately and remained at the blast sight for nearly a week. The death of 241 USMC/USN personnel affected the spirit of the crew deeply as many of those who died had been transported to the MED onboard the ship or embarked for liberty port trips to Antalya and Athens.

On 24 October the MARG designated to relieve the Beirut task force conducted combat operations in Grenada and the ship's schedule was again "up in the air". However on 17 November the turn-over was accomplished and MARG 2-83 departed for Rota, Spain enroute home.

While transiting to Rota the engineers successfully completed an Operation Propulsion Plant Exam by the CINCLANT Propulsion Examining Board. Unquestionably to pass this toughest possible inspection with virtually zero repair assistance while conducting high tempo operations in a continuously hostile environment was a landmark achievement for USS PORTLAND's engineering department.

Arriving in Rota on 25 November, the ship enjoyed a brief liberty stop while completing agriculture wash down/inspection. On 28 November the ship changed operational control from SIXTHFLT to SECONDFLT and returned home to Little Creek on 8 December 1983.

On 13 December 1983 Commander Stanley D. GASTAR, USN assumed command of USS PORTLAND and the ship concluded the year in a holiday leave and upkeep period.